
News Release

CONTACT:

Don Rhodes, 213/236-1840

Jeff Lustgarten or Dan Witzling, 323/466-3445

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2006



SCAG PRESENTS REGIONAL AIRPORT STRATEGY AT CONGRESSIONAL HEARING

Ground Access Improvement To Play Critical Role In Accommodating Regional Airport Demand

Corona, Calif. – The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) presented a proposal today for how Southern California can develop and implement a regional airport system to accommodate future passenger and freight demands. SCAG Executive Director Mark Pisano testified before a special congressional hearing chaired by Rep. John Mica (R-FL), Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Aviation, about "Meeting Future Aviation Capacity Needs in Southern California." Pisano testified that the successful implementation of a regional airport system depend upon critical ground access improvements to Southern California airports.

"SCAG has long advocated for the development of a truly regional airport system that minimizes growing pressures on LAX and maximizes use of Southern California's airport assets," SCAG Executive Director Mark Pisano said. "The primary challenge of a decentralized aviation system relates to the fact that most of the demand will continue to reside in the urban areas of Los Angeles and Orange Counties, so meeting future airport needs are inextricably tied to airport ground access."

Chairman Mica, who was invited by SCAG during their recent Consensus trip to Washington to get a more detailed briefing on Southern California's airports, remarked, "The Southern California airport system is critical to the future of our nation's economic growth." Southern California Congressmen Ken Calvert and John Campbell were also in attendance at the hearing.

According to SCAG, approximately 90 million people currently utilize Southern California's airport system each year, with approximately 60.7 million using LAX. In terms of cargo demand, the regional system carried approximately 2.8 million tons of cargo in 2004,

(more)

with LAX responsible for around 74 percent of that total cargo. By the year 2030, demand on the regional airport system is expected to be as high as 170 million air passengers and 8.72 million tons of cargo, far beyond the capacity of LAX. As part of the recent settlement agreement, LAWA and the City of Los Angeles agreed to limit passenger growth at LAX to 78 million air passengers, meaning that Southern California's airports will need to accommodate the remaining demand.

In recent weeks, SCAG has been working with the Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) to begin the process of identifying short- and long-term efforts to facilitate the development of regional airport system. SCAG's recommendations include:

- Relieving immediate bottlenecks around airports through arterial, intersection and interchange improvements
- Developing a regional system of "fly-away" centers for passengers to take transit to LAX and other airports
- Pursuing high-speed ground access options to link the region's major airports and provide viable travel alternatives to regional airports
- Developing a "regional airport consortium" to coordinate the activities of airport and transportation agencies, as well as to prioritize key ground access improvements

Pisano made several recommendations to the Subcommittee on ways in which the federal government can assist in the implementation of a regional aviation decentralization strategy, including:

- Funding support for airports in "global gateways" like Southern California
- Funding support for modest capital improvements to individual airport facilities
- Allowing proportional share funding contributions from airports and major activity centers to help finance development of high-speed ground access options
- Increasing flexibility in funding allocated to mitigate the community impacts of airports, including changes to landing fees that give airlines greater incentives to utilize cost-effective air and noise emission reduction technologies

"We are looking forward to working closely with Congress and the Federal Department of Transportation to address the challenge of meeting the future airport demands of Southern California," said Pisano. "Our region is the most important global gateway in the country, and Southern California airports play a crucial role in our international trade, particularly with Pacific Rim countries."

For more information about SCAG's regional airport planning efforts, please call Jeff Lustgarten of Cerrell Associates at 323/466-3445 or visit the SCAG web site at www.scag.ca.gov.